


FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS		SECTION: CQ, Electronic Communications and Data Management
		NUMBER 1
SUBJECT: Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications System		PAGE 1 of 17
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PREPARED BY: Chief Technology Officer, Division of Technology, and Director, Policy and Planning		APPROVED BY SUPERINTENDENT 

1.0 **PURPOSE**

Access to the District's Electronic Communications system, including the Internet, shall be made available to the Board of Education, students and employees for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations. The advantages afforded by the rich, digital resources available today through the World Wide Web outweigh any disadvantage. However, it is important to remember that access is a privilege, not a right, and carries with it responsibilities for all involved. Access to the general public shall be made in accordance with administrative regulations.


This administrative regulation establishes a set of procedures, practices, and responsibilities regarding the use of the District's Electronic Communications systems including the Internet, Intranet, electronic mail, pagers, cellular telephones, and other messaging devices.

The regulation is intended to protect all users of the District's electronic communications facilities from inappropriate or offensive media during the course of their use. A second intent is to provide all users of the District's Electronic Communications facilities with a more reliable, robust, secure, and maintainable facility.

Users are reminded that all information generated on, stored in, or handled by any District-owned computer system, associated electronic information storage systems (including back-up copies) and District-provided communication devices of any kind is considered to be the property of the District and is governed by all applicable state laws regarding local government records.

2.0 **Key Words**

- 2.1 Electronic Communications System
- 2.2 Content Filter
- 2.3 Internet
- 2.4 Intranet
- 2.5 Firewall
- 2.6 Copyright
- 2.7 Network Node
- 2.8 Web Browsing
- 2.9 E-mail
- 2.10 Limited Use
- 2.11 Communication Devices

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3.0 **DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED**

All Departments and Schools.

4.0 **SPECIAL DISTRIBUTION**

All students and staff, as well as members of the public, that utilize or have access to District electronic communications system.

5.0 **REFERENCES**

Board Policy [CQ \(LEGAL\)](#), *Electronic Communication and Data Management*, stipulates that:

Under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the District must, as a prerequisite to receiving universal service discount rates, implement certain Internet safety measures and submit certification to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 47 U.S.C. 254.


Board Policy [CQ \(LOCAL\)](#), *Electronic Communications and Data Management*, declares:

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate electronic media resources for instructional and administrative purposes.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, guidelines, and user agreements consistent with the purposes and mission of the District and with law and policy.

Access to the District's electronic communications system is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to allow monitoring of their use and to comply with such regulations and guidelines. Noncompliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with District policies. [See DH, FN series, and the Student Code of Conduct]. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the District.

Board Policy [DBF \(LOCAL\)](#), *Employment Requirements and Restrictions*, states:

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The full-time position held by an employee of the District shall take precedence over any other occupational interest of the employee. An employee shall not perform any personal work during regular business hours, except while on approved leave. The use of any District facilities or property, equipment, or resources for personal business or gain is strictly prohibited.


Please see "Limited Personal Use" in Section 8.0 and "Unacceptable Use" in Section 9.0.

Board Policy [DH \(LOCAL\)](#), *Employee Standards of Conduct*, prescribes:

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards to their status as District employees. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. [See DCD and DF series].

6.0 **DEFINITIONS**

- 6.1 **Electronic Communications Systems** – Those components of the District's infrastructure that provide voice, data, and video delivery to students, staff, and community of Fort Worth ISD.
- 6.2 **Content Filter** – A software or hardware device that monitors and/or controls a browser's access to Internet resources based on predefined rules.
- 6.3 **Internet** – An electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world. Sometimes referred to as the World Wide Web.
- 6.4 **Intranet** – An electronic communications network that connects computers, printers, and other peripherals in an organization. Typically, these networks are connected to the Internet by means of a gateway such as a firewall.
- 6.5 **Firewall** – A software and hardware device that controls electronic communications between the District's internal network and the external network (Internet).
- 6.6 **Copyright** – The exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, and sell the matter and form (as of a literary, musical, or artistic work).

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6.7 **Network Node** – A computer, printer, or network device that is physically or logically attached to the District’s network infrastructure. Examples are desktop computers, laptop computers, inkjet or laser printers, network switches, routers, hubs, transceivers, wireless access points, etc.

6.8 **Web Browsing** – The download of electronic documents (text, graphics, multimedia, etc) through the use of a computer program (Web Browser) such as Internet Explorer. The program allows the user to navigate to Web sites (internal to FWISD and external) and requests download for display on the computer.

6.9 **E-mail** – A means or system for transmitting messages electronically (as between computers on a network or the Internet). It can also refer to messages sent and received electronically through an e-mail system.

6.10 **Limited Use** – Means no more than one (1) hour use per day outside of duty hours.

6.11 **Communication Devices** – Any electronic device that allows communication either synchronously or asynchronously in either a digital or analog format.


7.0 **OBJECTIVE**

It is the intent of the District to make available and provide access through the Electronic Communication system to resources and materials, which expand and further the education of Fort Worth ISD students. The District is providing access to its school computer systems, computer networks, the Internet, and any other District-owned communication devices for educational purposes only. In particular, the use of Internet Browsing, e-mail, and Web 2.0 tools enable access to a broad range of data and services, which means previously unavailable educational information and other needed resources, are supplied to the classroom in an expedient and efficient manner for educational purposes.

8.0 **LIMITED PERSONAL USE**

Pursuant to Board Policy [CQ \(LOCAL\)](#), *Electronic Communication and Data Management*, Limited personal use of the system shall be permitted if the use:

1. Imposes no tangible cost to the District;

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2. Does not unduly burden the District's computer or network resources;
and
3. Has no adverse effect on an employee's job performance or on a
student's academic performance.


"Personal use" means use of the District's Electronic Communication system that conforms to the definition of Acceptable Use in the Fort Worth ISD Board Policy and applicable Administrative Regulations, but has no direct instructional or administrative value. "Limited" in this context refers to the amount of time a student or employee spends browsing for personal use. To conform to the restriction that such use does not adversely impact an employee's job performance, all personal use should be limited to rest and lunch breaks or outside of duty hours. Limited use also means no more than one (1) hour use per day outside of duty hours. (Employees should always be mindful of the public's perception). For students, reasonable limits on browsing shall be set and regulated by teachers or librarians and administrators responsible for the computer resources they control.

The Network Services Group of Division of Technology reviews and analyzes the network traffic and utilization reports. Also, continuous monitoring of workstations connected to the network is routinely performed. Any anomalies that arise or suspicious activities shall be investigated and reported to the appropriate supervisor or the Office of Professional Standards.


No individual or employee has any personal, property, or privacy right or interest in any information that passes through, or that is created, collected, assembled, stored or maintained on any District computer, wireless service device, or electronic information storage system (Local Government Code, Section 201.005b). All such information is generally considered public and may be subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code, Chapter 552), unless a specific exception applies.

9.0 **ACCEPTABLE USE**

The District is providing access to its school computer systems, computer networks, the Internet, and other District-owned communication devices for educational purposes only. If there is any doubt about whether a contemplated activity is educational, consult with the person(s) designated by the school to help decide. Accordingly, regulations for participation by anyone on the Internet shall include but not be limited to the following:

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- a) All users must abide by rules of Network etiquette – Netiquette, including the following:
 - Be polite. Use appropriate language and graphics. No swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening language.
 - Avoid language and/or graphic representations which may be offensive to other users. Do not use network or Internet access to make, distribute, or redistribute jokes, stories, or other material which is based on slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.
 - Do not assume that a sender of e-mail is giving his or her permission to forward or redistribute the message to third parties or to give his/her e-mail address to third parties. This should only be done with permission or when the individual would have no objection.
- b) Teachers may allow individual students to use district provided e-mail, electronic chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking sites, and other forms of direct electronic communications for educational purposes only and with proper supervision. Proper supervision shall include the teachers having the documentation of the students' usernames and passwords on file and being able to monitor the account. This excludes the use of student personal e-mail accounts and personal social networking sites in the school environment.
- c) No personal addresses, personal phone numbers, or last names of students will be permitted to be given out on the Internet. No identifiable photographs will be allowed to be published on the Internet without appropriate written consent. Concerning a student, appropriate written consent means a signature by a parent or legal guardian of the student.
- d) A student may not attempt to access any Internet resource without the prior consent of the teacher. The Internet is an extension of the classroom and teachers are responsible for and must be aware of where his/her student goes on the Internet.
- e) Privacy. Network and Internet access is provided as a tool for a student's education. The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time, and without prior notice, any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

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- f) Student Photos/Student Work. Publishing student pictures, video, and work on websites promotes learning, collaboration and provides an opportunity to share the achievements of students. Images and products of students may be included on the website without identifying captions or names. Parents/guardians must indicate their written consent to publish their child's photo or school work on any school related website before the item is published to the web. Please note that under no circumstances will student photos or work be identified with first and last name on a FWISD website, including the District, school, or teacher website.
- g) Copyright. All students and faculty must adhere to the copyright laws of the United States (P.L. 94-553) and the Congressional Guidelines that delineate it regarding software, authorship, and copying information.


10.0 **UNACCEPTABLE USE**

Despite the value electronic communications can bring, the improper use of such resources or e-mail can be counterproductive to the educational mission of the District. All users are advised that the use of the computer network, the Intranet, the Internet, and other District-owned communication devices is, therefore, a privilege, not a right. Any user who violates this agreement shall, at a minimum, have his or her access to the network and Internet terminated and is subject to disciplinary action by the school administrator. This disciplinary action could include the termination of employment for unacceptable use of these resources.


The following are examples of unacceptable use of network nodes on the Fort Worth ISD Electronic Communication system. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of technology, this list is not exhaustive nor does it detail every conceivable inappropriate use of the electronic communication system. When the conformance of a particular activity to policy or regulation is unclear, this list should be used as a guide to gauge whether it is acceptable or not. These guidelines apply to District administrators, all faculty and staff, as well as students and the general public.

The District network, including the Internet, shall be used primarily for instructional and administrative uses. This system shall not be used for:

1. Private gain, lobbying, promoting or selling products or services for personal gain, or in violation of laws, policies, or regulations.


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2. Charitable endeavors not specifically sanctioned by the District, solicitations, advertisements, private business activities, or amusement/entertainment purposes.
3. Trying to discover another user's password.
4. Allowing other persons (other than authorized staff members) to use their name, logon password, or files for any reason.
5. Purposefully erasing, renaming, or making unusable another person's computer files, programs, or storage media.
6. Copying, changing, or transferring any licensed software or copyrighted software documentation that violates the terms of the software license.
7. Engaging in unauthorized access to the network, including so-called "hacking" and other unlawful activities. Such activities are prohibited, and may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Writing, producing, generating, copying, propagating, or attempting to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or otherwise hinder the performance of any computer's memory, file system, or software; and
 - b. Intentionally damaging the system, including hardware and other associated equipment, damaging information belonging to others, misusing system resources, or allowing others to misuse system resources.
8. Accessing or creating any obscene, offensive, objectionable, or sexually-oriented information, language, or images. If such information is accessed accidentally, the user shall immediately notify the site administrator or designee. The site administrator or designee shall notify Network Services and provide the Web address of the site.
9. Transferring, referring, directing, or communicating to others profanity, offensive, obscene, or sexually-oriented language, images, or threats for any purpose.
10. Removing technology equipment (hardware or software) from the District premises without written permission from the site administrator and/or the employee's immediate supervisor. The site administrator and/or immediate supervisor will keep such permission forms on file for a period of one year from the date of the authorization. These authorization forms must be updated annually.
 - a. Laptop computers, PDA devices, mobile telephones and other such technology equipment designed to be portable are allowed to

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be removed from District's premise as authorized by the site administrator and do not require annual permission authorization.


11. Deleting or changing the electronic mail belonging to another system user or interfering with the ability of other system users to receive/send electronic mail without the permission of the owner of the account.
12. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information (e.g. picture, full name, home address, or home phone number) relative to students, trustees, and employees of the District.
13. Defeating or circumventing content filtering solutions put in place by the administrator to protect against inappropriate and/or offensive content.
14. Defeating or making inoperative anti-virus software installed on District-owned workstations, except temporarily for the express purpose of installing software when the anti-virus software interferes with the normal software installation.
15. The downloading or streaming of media files (video or music) or large graphics, which have no educational value or intention of being used in an instructional setting in the District. These fall into the category of "unduly burdening" the District network resources and is explicitly prohibited in Board Policy CQ.
16. Conversing electronically in "chat rooms" or any use of chat-based services (IRC, web based chat, AOL Instant Messenger, etc) without a valid instructional or administrative use. Use of other "Instant Messaging" protocols internally should be restricted to activities that have a valid instructional or administrative purpose. Likewise, any participation of students or employees in web log (BLOG) sites is restricted to activities that have a valid instructional or administrative purpose.
17. Unauthorized use of the network for voice communications using voice encoding protocols such as Skype. Use of the network for these purposes, which may have a valid instructional or administrative purpose, must be authorized by the Division of Technology in advance of their use.
18. Gambling or gaming for entertainment or financial gain. Such activities are strictly prohibited. This includes web access to gambling sites, lottery sites or other sites for non-curricular use. Games, which are educational and have an instructional value, are allowed when used in conjunction with District endorsed curriculum.
19. Downloading and installing Internet software is strictly discouraged. Notification of a need to download should be made to the Help Desk in

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the office of Customer Service. Once approved, the downloaded product will be made available on the District's Intranet for use and the requestor will be notified of the availability by e-mail. Downloaded software, innocent as it may seem, can contain viruses, spyware or other malicious software products that can affect operation of networking services and computer operation.

20. Using of software that regularly "polls" external websites or Internet resources. WebShots, Weatherbug, and Precision Time are examples of such programs.
21. Participating in peer-to-peer networking or peer-to-peer file sharing which is not specifically endorsed by the District.
22. **No unauthorized network devices may be attached to the network.** This includes wireless access points, switches, hubs, routers, or any other device. Putting such devices on the network can compromise the reliability, speed, and security of the network. Any unauthorized devices attached will be disabled by the Network Services staff, and are subject to confiscation.
23. Non-District-owned equipment may not be attached to the network, nor any non-District-owned peripheral equipment be attached to District-owned computers. This prohibition includes laptop and desktop computers, printers, or removable media such as memory sticks, "jump drives," and/or any other external memory device with or without intent to move data and/or programs to or from the computer. For occasional use, the District has plans to provide wireless guest access, which should accommodate external trainers, consultants, or vendors.

Unacceptable Use of the District's Electronic Communications system as described above is prohibited. If the user identifies or knows of a security problem on the network, the user will notify a teacher or the site administrator. The teacher or the site administrator will then notify the Network Services Group of the Division of Technology, who, depending on the severity of the problem, may notify Internal Audit and/or the Office of Professional Standards. Except for notification, the user will not demonstrate and/or broadcast the security problem to other users.

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11.0 **E-mail Usage Regulations**

Issuance of e-mail accounts is intended to improve communications. E-mail is also used to send “blast” or “popup” messages to users. E-mail accounts should be checked every day that the employee is on duty.


Employees will use appropriate e-mail etiquette. E-mail etiquette guidelines are posted on the District website.

All electronic messages sent or received by any District employee to another District employee (in network) as well as e-mail outside of the District’s network are generally open for public inspection. Citizens can request copies of electronic mail messages or electronic schedules. The electronic messaging and scheduling systems employed by the District do not permit personal messages and personal appointments to be segregated from District-related business. Therefore, all messages and appointments are kept as part of the public record. E-mail messages and electronic schedules are the property of the District, not the individual originating them, and they are subject to review.

Procedure for handling inappropriate mail sent to your account

Users are limited in their ability to control inbound e-mail, however, when an inappropriate e-mail or attachment has been received, it is the responsibility of the user to adhere to the following procedure:

1. If you know who sent you the e-mail, notify the sender of the e-mail that it is inappropriate, and advise them to discontinue sending any such e-mails in the future;
2. Forward the e-mail to the FWISD Mailabuse e-mail account, (Mailabuse is an e-mail address that exists on the District’s e-mail system. It is used to create a record of the e-mail as well as acknowledge receipt of submittal to it);
3. An autoreply will be sent to you confirming that you have forwarded an e-mail to mailabuse reporting account;
4. Print the autoreply e-mail for your records;
5. Don’t forward to any address other than the abuse address; and
6. Delete the e-mail message.

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12.0 Internet Browsing or Web Application Usage Guidelines


Procedure for handling inappropriate web content seen on District computers.

Users don't always know who used a District resource to access the electronic communication system prior to their using it. Artifacts of web usage can be left on a computer that may represent evidence of policy or regulation violations. Whether these artifacts are created intentionally or not, the same procedure applies. If either of these is seen, please follow the following procedure:

1. Document the evidence of policy or regulation violation;
2. Immediately shut down the machine, and report it to your supervisor, (teacher, if a student);
3. Mark the machine "DO NOT USE;" and
4. Call the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) and relay the documented evidence.
5. If OPS chooses to investigate, they will handle the balance of the process.
6. If OPS chooses not to investigate, place a workorder to the Division of Technology to have the computer reimaged.

13.0 INTERNET SAFETY

- Despite every effort for supervision and filtering, all users and their parents/guardians are advised that access to the electronic network may include the potential for access to materials inappropriate for school-aged students. *Every user* must take responsibility for his or her use of the network and Internet and avoid these sites.
- Personal Safety. In using the network and Internet, users should not reveal personal information such as home address or telephone number. Users should never arrange a face to face meeting with someone they "met" on the Internet without a parent's permission.
- Confidentiality of Student Information. Personally identifiable information concerning students may not be disclosed or used in any way on the Internet without the permission of a parent or guardian. Users should never give out private or confidential information about themselves or others on the Internet.
- Active Restriction Measures. The District will utilize filtering software or other technologies to prevent students from accessing visual depictions

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that are (1) obscene, (2) pornographic, or (3) harmful to minors. The use of anonymous proxies to get around the content filter is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of this policy. The school will also monitor the online activities of students, through direct observation and/or technological means.

14.0 USE OF NEW WEB TOOLS

Online communication is critical to students' learning of 21st Century skills. Tools such as blogging and podcasting offer an authentic, real-world vehicle for student expression. The primary responsibility of all District employees to students is their safety. Hence, expectations for classroom blog, student protected e-mail, podcast projects or other Web interactive use must follow all established Internet safety guidelines.

Blogging/Podcasting Terms and Conditions:

- The use of blogs, podcasts or other Web 2.0 tools is considered an extension of the classroom. Therefore, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate in all uses of blogs, podcasts, or other Web 2.0 tools. This includes, but is not limited to, profanity, racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks.
- Students using blogs, podcasts, or other web tools are expected to act safely by keeping ALL personal information out of their posts.
- A student should NEVER post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including addresses or phone numbers, or photographs). Students should never, under any circumstances, agree to meet someone they have met over the Internet.
- Never link to web sites from a blog or blog comment without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.
- Students using such tools agree to not share their user name or password with anyone besides their teachers and parents and treat blog spaces as classroom spaces. Speech that is inappropriate for class is also inappropriate for a blog.

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- Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or be subject to consequences appropriate to misuse.
- See the Student Code of Conduct

15.0 Compliance with District Standards

Hardware and Software Standards

All Desktop computers, monitors, and printers purchased must adhere to published district standards to be approved for acquisition. The acquisition of equipment that does not conform to these standards, but is needed because of application demands or user preferences, requires the approval of the Chief Technology Officer. The Purchasing department will intercept Purchase Orders for non-standard equipment and refer them to the appropriate party for approval. Please refer to the FWISD Purchasing Manual for further details.

Voice, Data, and Video Network Standards

All new applications added to the FWISD network must be able to use the District's Directory Services (Active Directory) for authentication. These applications must be approved/certified by the Division of Technology group, prior to their deployment to ensure this conformance and to establish appropriate security groups to support the application.


16.0 Computer Equipment and Software Disposal

Disposal of Computer Equipment

Computer equipment that is no longer usable must be salvaged through the District's normal surplus equipment process. See Board Policy CI (Local)

Prior to sending the computer to surplus, the user is responsible for backing up and then deleting any data written to the computer hard drive and removing any user-installed programs. All confidential information must be removed at this time. Likewise, the user should ensure that no removable media has been left in the machine.

Once at the salvage area, no FWISD employee (other than authorized Division of Technology employees or contractors) shall "recycle" equipment back into any FWISD facility.

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Prior to its sale, the Division of Technology shall inspect the equipment to determine if any components are valuable or reusable. The Hard drives will be erased, scoured, and then approved for sale.


17.0 **RESPONSIBILITY/AUTHORITY**

Teachers shall:

1. Provide developmentally appropriate guidance to students as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the district curriculum.
2. Inform all students of their rights and responsibilities as users of the District network prior to gaining access to that network, either as an individual user or as a member of a class or group.
3. Direct the use of networked resources in support of educational goals.
4. Treat student infractions of the Acceptable Use Policy according to the school discipline policy.
5. Provide alternate activities for students who do not have permission to use the Internet.

Campus Administrators or their designees shall:

1. Be responsible for ensuring all students under their direction, as well as the student's parent/guardian, receive instructions on the Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications system and that students and their parent/guardian sign receipt for the policy and regulations as embedded in the student code of conduct.
2. Include the Acceptable Use Policy in the student handbook and ensure that handbooks are distributed to all students.
3. Handle student infractions of the Acceptable Use Policy according to the District's discipline policy.
4. Identify to all staff those students who do not have permission to use the Internet. These forms are to be kept on file during the school year.

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Students shall:

1. Annually, sign receipt for the Student Code of Conduct, which includes a summary of the District's Acceptable Use Policy.
2. Be responsible for their own actions in conjunction with all use of the District's electronic communication system. *Failure to sign such an acknowledgement by the user of the system does not void the intent of Board Policy CQ, the Student Code of Conduct, or these regulations.*

Campus Administrators, Department Heads or their designees shall:


1. Be responsible for ensuring that all staff under their direction receive instructions and have knowledge of the Administrative Regulation on Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication system and Internet Safety.
2. Be responsible for ensuring that any members of the general public that utilize or have access to District computers are aware of the Administrative Regulation on the Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications system.

The Chief Technology Officer or designee shall:

1. Be responsible for providing best effort content filtering for Internet Access provided to users of the District's electronic communications systems.
2. Monitor the usage of the electronic communication system. Among other parameters, bandwidth utilization, time spent browsing the Internet, and protocol usages will be regularly monitored and analyzed. Any indication of violation of Board Policy CQ and this Administrative Regulation shall be reported to the appropriate supervisor or to the Office of Professional Standards.

The Superintendent or designee shall:

Assign and authorize staff to conduct usage reviews at random or when a potential violation of Board Policy CQ and/or this Administrative Regulation is suspected.

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It is the obligation of every user (students and employees, as well as the general public) to use responsibly the District's Electronic Communication system for the instructional and administrative purposes intended in concurrence with Board Policies and administrative regulations and/or guidelines. In addition, no user of the Fort Worth ISD communication system has any assumption of privacy.